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WESTERN EUROPE – CANADA – INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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New Cabinet Expected Soon in Portugal

Portuguese Prime Minister-designate Azevedo, after consultation with the political parties, has announced that a new government will be named in two or three days. The anti-Communist faction of Major Melo Antunes, meanwhile, has taken steps to consolidate its position within Portugal's ruling military councils.

The Antunes group, excluded from recent meetings of the Revolutionary Council, quickly made its presence felt when a revamped council met for the first time yesterday. The council decided:

- To appoint Antunes supporter Vasco Lourenco as head of a committee to restructure both the Revolutionary Council and the pro-Communist Armed Forces General Assembly.
- To reinstate anti-Communist former council members Melo Antunes and Vitor Alves.
- To prevent unauthorized announcements about military units and their political views.
- To proscribe interviews by military figures other than members of the council, in an apparent attempt to prevent public statements by former prime minister Goncalves and other pro-Communist officers.

With the announced restructuring of the assembly, the council, which since July has been relegated to a purely advisory role, appeared to be reasserting itself as the supreme authority in the country. As evidence of its new authority, the council decreed that disciplinary measures would be taken against

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a military police regiment that has refused to go to Angola.

The council also confirmed the military's intention to play a dominant political role when it launched an investigation into statements made by a local leader of the center-left Popular Democratic Party. The party official had urged that the Armed Forces Movement be dissolved, that the Revolutionary Council be scrapped, and that the military return to its barracks and leave the running of the country to civilian politicians.

Role to be Measured

It is not yet clear what effect, if any, the Antunes group's new assertiveness will have on the formation of the new government. During the struggle to remove Goncalves, the Antunes faction reportedly pursued a joint strategy with the Socialists and Popular Democrats. The goodwill established during the period could easily break down, however, if the political parties' excessive demands for power frustrate the military in its desire to form a government and get the country moving again.

US embassy sources reported yesterday that both the democratic parties and the Communists could cause trouble in the selection of a government, but last evening Azevedo was confident that he could present a cabinet soon. His confidence seemed to be borne out by the Goncalves cabinet's announcement that it will remain in office until the new government is sworn in.

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